

MADURA PASS.

Sinking the Bore.

To the Editor.

Sir,—Mr. G. P. Stevens's letter in your issue of the 7th inst. comments on my statement in your issue of May 1 regarding Madura Pass. The sinking of Madura bore and other work was carried out in the Eucla district from June, 1902, to March, 1904. Mr. H. C. Castilla was appointed to the position of resident engineer in the Eucla district and transport officer for the work carried out there, with strict instructions from the Engineer-in-Chief (Mr. C. S. R. Palmer) to keep me supplied in all my requirements to bring the work to a successful issue. Mr. Castilla spent only about one-third of his time at Madura, having to do a great deal of travelling. He was away from Madura as much as three and four weeks at a time gaining information about the proposed trans-continental railway for political purposes besides carrying out his own work.

Mr. Stevens seems to be at sea in most of his statements. The first bore put down was about 27 miles north of Madura out on the plain, as there was no way of getting the smaller boring plant up the cliffs (the Hampton Range) between Eucla and Twilight Cove. These are the points where the Hampton Range makes contact with the sea coast about 190 miles apart. There was no road up the cliffs in this stretch of range where a team could haul up an empty

waggon with safety, so the plant for the bore was landed at Twilight Cove, about 15 miles west of Eyre's Sand Patch telegraph station. At this place the camel team only took half loads on to the tableland and then made full loads. Eyre's Sand Patch is about 55 miles from Madura, New South Wales. Eucla is about 120 miles east and Madura bore is 29 miles from the coast under the cliffs. This is the place where the cliffs are farthest from the coast.

When the bore on the plain was finished the boring plant for the Madura deep bore had arrived by the sailing boat Grace Darling at Yambum, about 40 miles from Madura. The bulk of the carting of this plant was done by George Scott with a big horse team, also two drays. John Graham had his camel team of 11 camels also carting. He did the carting for the small bore out on the plain from Twilight Cove. Eucla Graham did not do any camel driving for Madura bore. Arthur A. Mason went down with the party as Mr. Castilla's camel man; after he left Eucla Graham arrived from the goldfields and took Mason's place with Mr. Castilla as his camel man. Mr. Castilla was not at the bore when water was struck, he being

bore when water was struck, he being at Yambum taking delivery of a shipment of boring plant by the sailing schooner Iris, and having it hauled off the beach to safety in case of storms. This boring plant was intended for the suggested bores on or near the proposed railway survey line near the 31st parallel of latitude. Mr. Castilla was not in the Eucla district when the bore was finished; he was called back to Perth and travelled overland via Coolgardie.

In Mr. Stevens's letter he makes some rash statements about Madura Pass and says it starts at the back door of Madura House and has been known and used for 20 years. I lived in the house for over 12 months and I consider it would cost anything up to £5,000 and 100 cases of explosives to make a road up that gorge where 12 bullocks could haul a waggon with five tons on it. That gorge is mostly used by rabbits when the dogs hurry them a bit. Madura Pass is about one and a half miles east of Madura House in a blind gorge. After you enter it a few chains it turns to the right. When I viewed it from the road half a mile away it did not appear favourable, but I felt we must have some way of getting up the cliffs and must have something better than I had seen previously along the cliffs. So I investigated it and found it could be made suitable for our purpose at a small cost. The gorge and the approach to it was virgin bush, mostly mallee and tea tree with other small scrub. I don't think a white man had ever been into it. If he had, he did not want a road up the cliffs or he would have used it. I took Mr. Castilla when he arrived back from one of his trips to see it and he was very pleased.

The pastoral lease at Madura was held by Ponton Bros. and Sharp of Balladonia station and Mr. Talbot secured it from them a few years after. The water struck in the shallow bore 425ft. deep is not fit for human consumption. It contains over an ounce of solids to the gallon. The bullock team that pulled the first load of boring plant up Madura Pass came from Fowler's Bay in South Australia and a bullock driver with it. This team took three loads out to near the proposed site about 70 miles north of Madura Pass. This was in November, 1903. The weather was getting too hot for the bullocks and the water too far apart for working bullocks. This work of deep boring was shut down at the end of 1903 and shallow boring was started on the overland stock route between Eucla and Balladonia sheep station.—Yours, etc., JAMES GRILL.

Murray-street, Perth.